



THE CHAMP - From left Melvin Peiffer, a friend of Ralph Sands from Lancaster County; Ralph Sands, Supreme Champion Cow, Jay; Harriet Sands, Ralph Sands daughter; Charlene Shupp, Wyoming/Lackawanna County Dairy Maid, 14, of Tunkhannock; Rebecca Staviscak, daughter of the late Claude Buttons, head dairyman at Hillside Farms, whose family donated the trophy.

Sandsdale

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set a dozen barn fires, was never apprehended.

Today, Sands has built up his herd to about 30 cattle, which are worth between \$5,000 and \$10,000 each.

The owner of a winning cow might get \$35 in prize money, but that's not what brings the farmers to the show says Tripp, a veteran cattle breeder himself.

"Pride, it's what you work for all year long," said Tripp. "Farmers don't make a lot of money and when you come here and have a winner it's something a little extra special."

Winning competitions does have its practical advantages though. Jay had a calf three weeks ago, and already Sands has been offered \$5,000 for it.

As he judges, Tripp explains to the audience of several dozen spectators what he's looking for in a great cow, citing "width of chest," or "dairyness."

"You know what an athlete in a certain sport should look like," said William Conyngham, owner of Hillside Farms, as he watched the competition. "The characteristics that you're looking for in an animal are those that are going to ensure long-term good health for milking and breeding. It does have a certain practical dollars and cents aspect if you're selling the offspring of a cow that has won."

In the dairy business, breeding has become increasingly impor-

tant, and sophisticated.

"You can't just make a living selling milk," said Sands. "It's the sale of breeding stock. More so now than before. It's very important and influential on whether you make it or don't make it."

Sands enters his cattle in 10 to 15 competitions a year. The contests coming up are at the Bloomsburg Fair and in Harrisburg.

"This breeding business is a big business," said Sands. "Artificial insemination has dominated breeding. It has enabled the small dairy farmer to use the more popular bulls that he couldn't afford himself."

"When you're selecting an animal, you're looking at the general appearance and configuration," said Sands. "Straightness of top line and good legs."

The breeding has brought results.

Sands estimated that an average cow may produce 15,000 to 17,000 pounds of milk a year, while an exceptional one may produce 25,000 to 30,000 pounds.

By contrast, in the 1850's an average cow would only produce 1,500 pounds of milk a year, and as recently as 1960, the average was only 9,000 pounds.

"Some people try and breed with a computer. But they breed in a different way than what I call a breeder of cattle," said Tripp, who has been judging for six and seven

years and breeding cattle all of his life. And with a lot of success - 188 of the cows he's worked with have been named All-American.

Despite the advances in technology, Tripp prefers to do some things the old-fashioned way.

"My computer is my eyes and my mind. One thing the computer and college experts will never control is mother nature,"



NEWS ITEM - Harveys Lake Borough Council is considering a plan under which the borough would provide cable television service to the community.

Commonwealth adds tax surcharge to bills

Effective August 24, Commonwealth Telephone Company bills will contain a new item called "surcharge." This surcharge reflects recent increases in certain state taxes on utilities.

for services Commonwealth provides under Pennsylvania tariffs and will be applied to charges for services provided on and after August 24, 1991.

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This new surcharge will be calculated by multiplying 2.94 percent by the customer's total charges

Lake Township recycling set for Sept. 14

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